



GUINEA

U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)
Population, Health, and Nutrition Briefing Sheet

Country Profile

Guinea is one of the poorest countries in West Africa, but it has made significant progress in the past decade by establishing a constitutional democracy, liberalizing its economy, and maintaining respectable economic growth rates of over 4 percent per year. The nation's poverty and lack of health infrastructure are reflected in extremely high mortality and fertility rates. To its credit, Guinea has repeatedly opened its borders to thousands of refugees; while this humanitarian policy has directly led to national economic and environmental setbacks, it has been important in promoting democratic stability in neighboring countries.

USAID Strategy

To help Guinea improve its health status and reduce its rapid population growth, USAID/Guinea focuses on promoting public policy development and increasing awareness at all levels of the need for improved family planning, maternal and child health, and HIV/AIDS prevention and control services. The mission emphasizes the establishment of sustainable services by promoting:

- A strong public health sector built on an integrated package of quality services, expanded outreach strategies, improved management and supervision, and a strengthened management information system;
- A strengthened private health sector through the social marketing of family planning and health commodities;
- Strategies and initiatives that provide communities with the skills and tools needed to manage health centers and implement primary health care interventions.

USAID/Guinea-supported public sector programs are targeting Upper and Forest Guinea, two of the most isolated and impoverished regions. The USAID/Guinea-supported private sector social marketing program is being implemented nationwide.

Major Health Activities

MSH/PRISM Public Sector. USAID awarded a new five-year public sector grant for \$18,000,000 to MSH in

October 1997. This is the largest of the planned activities under the USAID/Guinea's Health Strategic Objective (SO2). *MSH/PRISM (Pour Renforcer les Interventions en Sante Reproductive et MST/SIDA)* will focus on strengthening public sector services in the regions of Forest Guinea and Upper Guinea. During the first year, activities will center on assessing the health delivery system, defining an integrated package of services/management, expanding outreach strategies, strengthening local health management committees, improving district management, establishing quality clinic norms and procedures, providing training to providers, and improving the supervision systems and management information systems.

PSI Social Marketing Private Sector. USAID has just awarded PSI a new five-year grant for \$4,800,000 in March 1988 to implement a nationwide private sector social marketing activity. This grant will be complemented with \$6,700,000 from the German government in mid-1998. The combined funds will be used for HIV/STI prevention, family planning, and MCH activities. PSI is implementing this activity through OSFAM, its local affiliate in Guinea. Under this activity, PSI will continue to build the institutional capability of the local affiliate to ensure the sustainability of social marketing interventions in Guinea.

Africare. In October 1997, Africare was awarded a four-year grant to implement an MCH initiative in two prefectures of Upper Guinea. Africare will strengthen and expand existing public sector MCH services and increase communities' capacity to take responsibility for their own MCH needs. Africare's program is expected to reduce maternal and child morbidity and mortality in the two prefectures.

Results

- The contraceptive couple years of protection (CYP) rate has increased markedly over the last 5 years. Starting at 12,807 in 1992, the CYP in 1997 reached 38,909. This can be attributed to the nationwide promotion of condoms and oral and injectable contraceptives through social marketing.



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- The number of community-based family planning service sites increased more than ten fold from 50 in 1996 to 550 in 1997. These increases were achieved through training provided to 500 community-based service agents in contraceptive methods; sales; and information, education, and communication; 200 health center personnel in supervision; and 16 regional trainers in performance evaluation and supervision. In addition, 48 newly assigned health center staff received basic training in contraceptive technology and STI/AIDS prevention.

Success Stories

USAID's success to date in Guinea has been built on the supportive environment for family planning created by the government and civil society. The 1992 National Population Policy, developed with USAID support, is the cornerstone for the Guinean government's course of action. In 1997, the Ministry of Planning held a National Symposium on Reproductive Health and a National Health Forum where population goals were reiterated and strategies reviewed to achieve a contraceptive prevalence rate of 25 percent by the year 2010.

A Family Code drafted and developed with USAID support will be a landmark legal document that protect women's rights, particularly the right to practice birth control. To overcome recent setbacks, the Ministry of Social Affairs, with United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and USAID funding, is working with rural and urban groups throughout Guinea to solicit grassroots support for its adoption. The code is expected to be sent for referral to the General Assembly in 1998.

Guinea's favorable policy environment led to the following 1997 milestones:

- A USAID-supported meeting with traditional and religious leaders resulted in improved media support for family planning and HIV/AIDS prevention education.
- The Ministry of Communication waived expensive fees for public television spots and the Office of Advertising, a Guinean parastatal, entered into a new contract with PSI and agreed to allow contraceptive product images on billboards and vehicles.
- The Ministry of Health created and staffed a Division of Reproductive Health.
- The University of Guinea School of Medicine introduced a USAID-supported reproductive health syllabus.

Continuing Challenges

Successes to date have begun to make a difference in alleviating poor health conditions in Guinea; however, longer-term improvements will be measured in Guinea's second National Demographic and Health Survey, which will be funded by USAID and implemented in 1999. USAID/Guinea will continue its efforts to facilitate a more effective response among donors, government, community organizations, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector to address critical health system constraints. In policy development, social marketing, and cost recovery, the emphasis will be on sustainability. Meanwhile, USAID collaboration with UNFPA, the International Planned Parenthood Federation, and the German government demonstrates a sustained international commitment to improving health and family planning in Guinea.



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